

**REQUEST for EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (RFEI)
Regarding Organic Waste Transfer Station Capacity and Related Management Services**

Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project Board

Submittal Due Date/Time: Noon; Friday, January 20, 2012

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) is to assist the Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project Board (Project Board) in determining how best to pursue provision of transfer station capacity to receive and transport commercial and residential organic wastes collected in the two counties to organic waste processing facilities located inside or outside the two counties.

The Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project (Project) is a joint powers board that works on behalf of Ramsey and Washington counties on a number of solid waste planning and operational issues. The Project is working to improve recovery and management of food waste and other organic waste. Beginning in 2012 the Project will be aggressively promoting the separate management of organic waste by commercial and institutional generators of that material (such as food processors, grocery stores, large kitchen operations, and restaurants). The work on this issue will start with a comprehensive effort to inform commercial generators of organic waste management options, develop business-friendly resources, facilitate business-to-business communication on this matter, and provide resources and services to jump-start more organic waste recycling. The Project is also examining the need for infrastructure, specifically transfer capacity for organic wastes, to increase the recovery of this material.

The Project Board is issuing this RFEI to processors, existing transfer station operators, potential contractors, and waste hauling companies active in the waste hauling and processing industry locally. The Project Board will use the responses to this RFEI to determine if there are private parties interested in providing organic waste transferring services and what key business conditions contractors believe are vital to project success.

This RFEI represents the first phase of development should the Project Board determine it is feasible to proceed. Additional phases could include a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified contractors and/or negotiation with one or more qualified contractors. If this approach is taken, then information gained from the RFEI will be used to help structure the follow-up RFP. The Project Board does not guarantee any formal solicitation/procurement process will be generated based on this RFEI. The Project Board encourages entities that may be interested in submitting a proposal in response to a formal RFP to provide information in response to this RFEI. Lack of a response to this RFEI will not disqualify any party from responding to any RFP.

The Project's engineering consultant, Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC. (Foth), will assist with the planning activities associated with the RFEI.

II. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

The Project Board was formed in 1986 as a result of planning processes leading to implementation of the Resource Recovery Facility located in Newport, MN. The Project Board includes membership from each County Board of Commissioners. Thus, Ramsey and Washington counties (Counties) have a long history of working together on solid waste management services including recent significant planning work for organic waste recovery. The Counties are also active in solid waste management planning issues in the region as participants in the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB).

The Joint Powers Agreement creating the Project Board provides that the Project Board shall administer joint solid waste management activities proposed by the Joint Staff Committee, which includes “food waste and organic waste reduction and recycling.” The Project Board has administered food waste and organic waste outreach, communication and technical assistance since 2003. The Project Board has engaged in information gathering and policy discussion during 2011 to help the Counties define their work on organic waste management as they prepared revisions to their solid waste master plans, and has identified strategies that the Counties should jointly administer.

Part of the planning activity conducted in 2011 included interviews, presentations, site visits, and follow-up with private sector entities active in the local solid waste market and in particular in organic waste recovery.

At its April 2011 meeting, the Project Board sought input from an industry panel familiar with organic waste management. One barrier to effective organic waste recovery is the issue of route density. All of the members of the industry panel at the April 2011 Project Board meeting, and in follow-up interviews, recognized the need for transfer station capacity for organic waste to overcome this barrier. There was support for the Counties becoming involved to develop or arrange for the transfer station capacity. Providing organic waste transfer capacity means establishing a location for the specific purpose of being available for organic wastes to be delivered from waste generators within the two counties. Foth conducted a review of current and potential transfer station capacity as a first step in determining if the Project Board should be involved. Foth looked at operational issues, tipping area of a transfer station that would be needed, types of materials, and costs. The findings from this preliminary work were:

- Odor management and good public relations are paramount, and should be considered a top priority.
- Transfer operations should be enclosed, with a tipping floor, storage bunker and transfer trailer loading area. Outdoor tipping can make odor control a challenge, as well as create difficulty with winter operations.
- Liquids management is critically important; significant volumes of liquid come out of certain commercial loads. Drainage to sanitary sewer is required.
- Potential contractors had questions that need to be addressed by the Project Board in order to adequately respond to the Counties’ needs.
- Existing organic waste processors and end users, such as composting facilities, livestock farmers, and livestock feed manufacturers, have different specifications for what types of materials may be included.

- The Project Board will be significantly involved in educational efforts to increase organic waste recovery separate from this effort regarding transfer capacity.

III. POTENTIAL ORGANIC WASTES TO BE TRANSFERRED

Ramsey and Washington counties reported in 2010 that there were about 48,000 tons of organic waste separately managed, almost all from commercial and institutional entities, such as schools and large food producers. The Counties estimate that there are about 88,000 tons of organic wastes still contained within mixed municipal solid waste, with about 50% generated by residents, and 50% by commercial/ institutional generators. It is this material, currently found in MSW, that the Project is targeting for separate management.

At this time, the Project does not have firm projections on the quantity of organic wastes that could be delivered. An organic waste transfer facility is operated in Hennepin County and receives daily amounts from 20 to 100 tons per day with an annual tonnage in 2011 estimated at 13,000 tons per year. All of this material is transferred to a composting facility. Their sources are estimated to be 25% residential, 25% institutional (schools), and 50% commercial. Of the commercial, 80% is estimated to be produce (vegetable matter with high moisture content). The Project does not know at this time the quantity or composition of organic wastes that would be delivered to a transfer station(s).

Obviously, the type of wastes included must coincide with the processor/end user. The primary end users are anticipated to be livestock farmers and/or composting facilities, while some material might also be delivered to a livestock feed manufacturer(s). Both livestock farmers and composting facilities can accept all types of produce, meats, seafood, dairy, bakery & dry goods, and deli & frozen foods. Compost facilities can also accept non-recyclable fibers such as food packaging, paper towels & tissues, paper plates, etc.

Commercial loads of food wastes such as produce can contain a high moisture content that requires special handling. Some materials may be odorous and require expeditious handling and odor control.

IV. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

The Project is requesting that firms interested in providing organic waste transfer services provide information as described below. No information provided by responders to the RFEI will be considered as binding should the Project proceed with a formal RFP process. Note that under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, all responses are considered nonpublic information when received by the Project but except for information the Responder claims as Trade Secret under the Act becomes public once the selection process is complete. Therefore, when responding, please indicate which information you deem trade secret. However, it must meet the definition of trade secret information contained in Minn. Stat. 13.37 subd. 1(b) in the opinion of the Project's attorneys.

Services are anticipated to include receipt and transport of organic waste from contractor location to the processor/end user. If the Project issues a formal RFP, it could seek to contract with only one contractor for the services, although it could allow such a contractor to include subcontractors in its proposal for provision of certain services (such as the trucking component).

Alternatively, the Project could seek to contract with more than one contractor in certain circumstances (e.g., different end user specifications accepting different types of organic wastes).

The Project does not expect to contract directly with end users, such as livestock farmers or composters. The operator of the transfer station would be expected to make such arrangements.

Please provide the following information in the order requested:

A. COMPANY INFORMATION

1. Company name and address
2. Name of the individual who will act as primary point of contact for inquiries
3. Contact person's telephone number and email address
4. Number of years in business
5. Description of current operations and services
6. General description of the organic waste transfer services that could be provided
7. Location or potential location of the transfer facility

B. QUESTIONS REGARDING KEY BUSINESS PARAMETERS

In order for your firm to submit a formal proposal, or contract for transfer capacity:

1. Is it necessary for the Project to provide an estimate of the organic waste tonnage that would be delivered?
2. What would be the minimum tonnage you would require to provide transfer capacity?
3. Would you require some type of a guaranteed minimum tonnage?
4. How long does the contract term need to be?
5. How would you suggest the payment terms be structured? There are a variety of alternatives, such as a fee per ton, a flat monthly payment, a base payment with an additional payment component by the ton, and others.
6. Do you have any concerns with contracting directly with the end user?

C. POTENTIAL OPERATIONAL ISSUES

1. What other materials will be handled in proximity of the organic wastes and should the Project have any concern related to other operations conducted on site?
2. What are your thoughts regarding high moistures and odor being operational issues? Should odor and high moisture content be an operational issue of concern for the Project?
3. What performance standards would you suggest that the Counties apply to this contract?
4. Could your transfer station facility receive and load out more than one type of organic waste, meeting different end user specifications?
5. What kinds of changes would you need to make at your facility to be able to accept and transfer organic waste materials?
6. What types of transfer trucks would be used?

D. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Should the Project issue an RFP, what additional information would you need to prepare and submit a response?

2. What criteria should the Project Board use to evaluate proposals?
3. Please provide any other suggestions you have with regard to the Project's examination of transfer capacity.

V. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

If potential respondents to this RFEI have questions about this request, they should be submitted in writing, email, or by phone no later than Friday January 6, 2012 to:

Dan Krivit, Senior Project Manager
Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC
8550 Hudson Blvd North Suite 125
Lake Elmo, MN 55042
Telephone (651) 288-8509
Email: dan.krivit@foth.com

If issues are raised that could affect responses from other potential respondents to the RFEI, the Project will issue an addendum with clarifications to the list of firms to which this RFEI was sent, no later than January 11, 2012.

Responses to this RFEI are due to the Project by Noon on January 20, 2012. Project staff and consultants will then review the information provided and develop a written summary of the technical and business aspects of the responses. The report will document the responses received, highlighting the level of interest shown. Any critical information needed to continue the process will be noted and recommendations provided for further steps (if any). Our current timeline is to have this report complete by mid-February, 2012.

Responses should be sent electronically as a PDF, or as a paper copy by U. S. Mail, so that they are received no later than January 20, 2012, to

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Thank you!